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Legislative Branch

Name: _____
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Background:
The United States Constitution has three parts: the preamble, the articles, and the amendments. The preamble is the introduction to the Constitution and it states the reasons and changes made to the Constitution and the rights that all citizens have. The articles are the bulk of the Constitution and, essentially, describe how the government will work. There are seven articles, each one dealing with a different aspect of the government, with the first three dealing with the three branches of government.

The first article is the longest and it describes how the legislative branch of the government, also known as Congress, will be run and organized. In short, the job of the legislative branch is to make the laws, but the system that the Constitution gives this branch is much more complicated than that. Congress has three types of powers:

- **Expressed powers:** The ones powers already written in the Constitution
- **Implied powers:** Powers not written in the Constitution but needed to perform the expressed powers
- **Inherent powers:** Powers that belong to all governments

Some of the main powers that Congress has, across all three categories, are the power to:

- To make laws, or change laws
- To declare war
- To levy taxes (to let someone have much people have to pay the federal government, for taxes)
- Organize all federal courts under the Supreme Court
- To borrow money
- Sell a national debt (to borrow)
- Assume power to (to let someone have much people have to pay the federal government, for taxes)
- Control the national borders

Congress is divided up into two branches or "houses": the lower house, also known as the Senate, and the upper house, also known as the House of Representatives. These two houses have to work together to carry out the powers assigned to Congress. Each house is different and has different requirements to be a member, a different number of representatives, different leaders, etc. Below is an outline of the basic facts for the Senate and the House of Representatives.

House of Representatives	Senate
• Is known as the lower house	• Is known as the upper house
• Called a representative	• Call a senator
• Led by the Speaker of the House	• Led by the Vice President
• Serves 2 year terms	• Serves a 6 year term
• 435 total members	• 1/3 of the senate is elected every 2 years
• Representatives per state are based on population	• 100 total members
• Elected by voters from their congressional district (Senators are elected)	• 2 senators are elected per state
• Must be 25 years old	• Elected by voters in the state they represent
• Must be a U.S. citizen for 7 years	• Must be 30 years old
• Must live in the state they are elected to represent	• Must be a U.S. citizen for 9 years
	• Must live in the state they are elected to represent

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